

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF  
THE OFCOM BOARD HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2016**

**Present**

Patricia Hodgson	Chairman
Sheila Noakes	Deputy Chairman
Sharon White	Chief Executive
Ben Verwaayen	Member
Lynne Brindley	Member
Graham Mather	Member
Nick Pollard	Member
Jonathan Oxley	Executive Member and Group Director, Competition
Steve Unger	Executive Member and Group Director, Strategy, International, Technology and Economists

**In attendance**

Kevin Bakhurst	Group Director, Content and Media Standards (minutes 16-17)
Polly Weitzman	General Counsel
Steve Gettings	Corporation Secretary
Jenny Leyland	Assistant Secretary to the Corporation

Other Ofcom Colleagues

**Ofcom Board/Content Board Membership**

1. The Chairman welcomed Nick Pollard to his first meeting following his appointment to the Ofcom Board with effect from 14 November 2016, replacing Bill Emmott.
2. The Chairman noted the decision taken by email between meetings to appoint Nick Pollard as Interim Chairman of the Content Board. The Chairman thanked Lynne Brindley for all she had done as Acting Chair of the Content Board, and Graham Mather for his contribution while he had joined the Content Board on a temporary basis.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2016 and matters arising – Board Minutes 232(16)**

3. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 18 October 2016 were **APPROVED** for signature as an accurate record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**Chairman's Report - oral**

4. The Chairman provided her report to the Board which included reference to a number of recent meetings.

**National Advisory Committees**

5. Following discussion, the Board confirmed that Nations' Board Members should not

serve as Chairs of Ofcom's National Advisory Committees, but should attend the meetings. The Board **AGREED** that recruitment should be undertaken for a new Chair of the National Advisory Committee for Wales as John Davies' term of office would expire on 28 February 2017. The Board **AGREED** that given the particular circumstances in Scotland with a recently opened office in Edinburgh and a new Director, Nations, Laura Alexander's term as Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Scotland should be extended by 12 months to 31 March 2018.

Membership of the Advisory Committee for England

6. Steve Gettings reported to the Board the outcome of a recent recruitment process to fill vacancies on the Advisory Committee for England. The Board **APPROVED** a recommendation to make two appointments.

**Report from the Chairman of the Content Board – oral**

7. Lynne Brindley reported on matters discussed at the Content Board meeting held on 25 October 2016.

**Reports from other Non-Executive Members – oral**

8. The Deputy Chairman, Lynne Brindley and Graham Mather reported on a recent visit to Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant Sorting Office. Graham Mather reported on his attendance at a recent meeting of the Essential Services Access Network. He also referred to a recent visit to Ofcom's offices at Baldock and the interesting work being done there. The Board **AGREED** that it would be helpful to have an information paper on the work being done at Baldock, which should be provided on an annual basis.

**Chief Executive's Report – Board Paper 115(16)**

9. Sharon White presented her report to the Board and provided an oral report on recent meetings.

**Ofcom Draft Annual Plan 2017/18 – Board Paper 118(16)**

10. Subject to comments noted during discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the draft Annual Plan 2017/18 for publication for a ten-week consultation period.

**Overview of Digital Communications Review (DCR) Board Papers at the November Board – Board Paper 117(16)**

11. The Board noted a paper which provided an overview of how the four DCR related items which followed on the agenda fitted with the overall implementation of the DCR strategy.

**DCR: Emerging Conclusions from the Connected Nations Report – Board Paper 118(16)**

12. The Board discussed and commented on a paper which set out the initial findings and high-level messages emerging from this year's Connected Nations report. The report would be published in December 2016.

<p><b><u>DCR: Broadband Universal Service Obligation – Board Paper 120(16)</u></b></p> <p>13. The Board discussed and commented on a paper which set out the content of a report to be made to Government providing technical advice on the design of the broadband universal service obligation (USO).</p>
<p><b><u>DCR: Implementing Ofcom’s Strategy: Ducts and Poles Access – Board Paper 119(16)</u></b></p> <p>14. The Board discussed and noted a paper which set out progress on proposals to improve Openreach’s underground ducts and telegraph poles. The Board noted the aim to publish a Ducts and Poles Access (DPA) consultation at the end of November 2016.</p>
<p><b><u>DCR: Protection of Landline-only Customers: Retail Market Review – Board Paper 121(16)</u></b></p> <p>15. Following discussion, the Board <b>ENDORSED</b> the proposal to carry out a retail market review, as set out in the paper.</p>
<p><b><u>BBC Regulation Update – Board Paper 122(16)</u></b></p> <p>16. The Board was provided with an overview of the consultations relating to the regulation of the BBC to be published in the next few months. The Board agreed a process for giving Members an opportunity to comment on a number of consultation documents which were due to be published before the next meeting.</p>
<p><b><u>The Future of the Content Board – Board Paper 126(16)</u></b></p> <p>17. The Board discussed and commented on a paper which set out thoughts on the future role of the Content Board; the need to update the Content Board Members’ Code of Conduct; proposals for a new model of engagement between non-executive members and colleagues; and the need in forthcoming recruitment to refresh the skills mix on the Content Board to ensure it remains current.</p>
<p><b><u>Ofcom Risk Appetite Statements – Board Paper 123(16)</u></b></p> <p>18. Each year the risk appetite statements are reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate for the organisation. The risk appetite statements had been reviewed by the Policy and Management Board on 6 October and subsequently discussed at the Risk and Audit Committee on 17 October 2016. During discussion the Board concluded that it would not wish to adopt one of the proposed changes. A further iteration will be provided for the next Board meeting.</p>
<p><b><u>Board Forward Agendas – Board Paper (128(16)</u></b></p> <p>19. The Board discussed the Board forward plan and comments were noted.</p>
<p><b><u>Information items</u></b></p> <p>20. The following information papers were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update on European Union Engagement – Board Paper 131(16)</li> <li>- Strategic Risk Register – Board Paper 133(16)</li> </ul>

**Minutes from other Boards/Panels/Committees**

21. The Board noted the minutes of the following meetings without comment:

- Risk and Audit Committee (6 June 2016)
- Advisory Committee for Scotland (22 June 2016)
- Ofcom Spectrum Advisory Board (18 July 2016)
- Content Board (13 September 2016)
- Communications Consumer Panel (22 September 2016).

**Any Other Business**

22. There was none.

**Date of the Next Meeting**

23. The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, 13 December 2016.